

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /028 W

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R 240633Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5453

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A DECON 7-23-76

TAGS: PINS, SCUL, LE

SUBJECT: BAALBEK AND ANJAR FESTIVALS CANCELLED

1. THE COMMITTEES FOR THE BAALBEK AND ANJAR SUMMER FESTIVALS HAVE DECIDED TO CANCEL BOTH OF THESE PERENNIALY POPULAR PROGRAMS FOR THE CURRENT SEASON. THREE REASONS ARE MENTIONED PRIVATELY BY THE COMMITTEES FOR THIS ACTION: (A) SECURITY CANNOT BE GUARANTEED ON THE ROADS LEADING TO AND FROM THE FESTIVALS AT NIGHT; (B) THE POTENTIAL AUDIENCE FOR THESE FESTIVALS HAS BEEN SCARED AWAY BY NEWS OF THE RECENT CLASHES; (C) IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO PUT ON PROGRAMS OF MUSIC AND DANCING AT A TIME WHEN MANY PEOPLE IN LEBANON ARE MOURNING THEIR LOSSES, ESPECIALLY IN THE BAALBEK AREA WHICH SUFFERED GREATLY.

2. COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND THAT MININT CAMILLE CHAMOUN

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WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN PUSHING THIS CANCELLATION DECISION, OVER THE

OBJECTIONS OF MINTOURISM GHASSAN TUEINI, DEPUTY RAYMOND
EDDE, AND THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE. CHAMOUN APPARENTLY OBJECTED
STRONGLY TO THE SECURITY RISK INVOLVED AND WON HIS POINT OVER
THE PLEAS OF THE OTHERS, WHO WISHED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT
LEBANON WAS RETURNING TO NORMAL AND TO SALVAGE AS MUCH AS
POSSIBLE OF THE SUMMER TOURIST EARNINGS. THE DECISION
REFLECTS THE CONTINUING NERVOUSNESS THAT EXISTS EVEN INOFFICIAL
CIRCLES, DESPITE THE RELATIVE CALM WHICH HAS PREVAILED OVER
THE PAST TWO WEEKS.
GODLEY

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